



THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

of the Carolina Foothills

Virtual Services via Zoom on the first and third Sundays of each month during the pandemic



Fall Colors in Downtown Tryon

Happening in November:

- Nov. 1 – Standard Time Begins
- Nov. 1 – UUF CF Virtual Service**
- Nov. 1 – All Saints Day
- Nov. 3 -- Election Day
- Nov. 11 – Veterans Day
- Nov. 15 – UUF CF Virtual Service**
- Nov. 26 – Thanksgiving Day
- Nov. 27 – Black Friday



Join the conversation at 10:30 on Nov. 1
<https://zoom.us/j/98462008943>
 or by phone: 646-876-9923
 Meeting # 98462008943

Sunday, November 1, 2020 – Lyndon Harris

ZEN *and the Art of Surviving an Election*

How many of you remember *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*? Robert Pirsig's 1974 novel has little to do with orthodox Zen meditative practice, and even less, as he states it, with motorcycle maintenance. But nevertheless, his novel (rejected by publishers 121 times!) remained on the NY Times bestseller list for years. What might Pirsig say to us as we brace ourselves for the 2020 presidential election, happening in just a couple of days? What might we learn from Zen practitioners about how to navigate these trying times? With a bit of wit, a few insights from meditative practice, zero knowledge of motorcycles, and a strong dose of hope, Lyndon will seek to offer some thoughts about facing the next few days (years?) with grace and civility, balanced with hope and expectations for the future.

Sunday, Nov. 15, 2020 –Guests Helen Wolfson and Eric Thomas

Gather the Spirit

The word "spirit" is often bandied about in UU congregations, but it seems to mean different things to different people. In this musical service, Eno River UU Fellowship members Helen Wolfson and Eric Thomas visit the concept of spirit from a humanist perspective and illustrate that the word embodies a core concept that can be meaningful to the humanist – and to others as well.



Plan to join this special presentation at 10:30 on November 15! <https://zoom.us/j/92930924845>

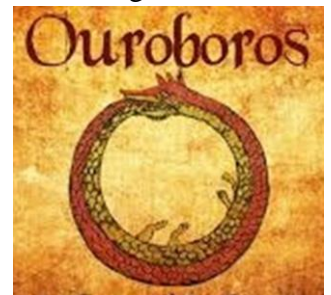
Or by Phone 646-876-9923 Meeting # 929 3092 4845

This I Believe: Responses and Revelations

The October 18 service on the theme of personal beliefs proved a great success. Even as two of the participants shared their responses by phone, everyone listening was fascinated at Annie's life experience, Phil's relationship with the cosmos, and Barbara's extraordinary expressions in what sounded like pure poetry. For those who missed it, here are their words in print. Thanks to each for their willingness to share!

Barbara Moffitt: "Sequences and Cycles"

Diligent reading, thoughtful and heart-deep searching and pages of both mindful and mindless scribbling have produced no single belief on which to focus the direction of my existence. Rather, I find I believe in the sequences and cycles of all that surrounds me---the hydrologic cycle of water as rain, rivers, oceans, tears, amniotic fluid---the power of kittens, babies, puppies, unfurling sprouts of acorns to arouse the nurturing instincts in all of us. I believe in the encompassing warmth of the stars in the dark of night, the fragrance of new-mown grass and spring water-cold watermelon. I believe in the heart-healing pulsing of drumbeats dancing in a campfire's heat waves, the visionary beauty of dawn-light washing away the dark night sky to reveal the soul-searing colors of the day. I believe in the velvet touch of a child's sticky hands patting mom's cheeks, the sweet softness of rose petals, the exquisite taste of sun-warm berries, the flashing silver sheen of jewelweed in water. I also believe in evil---I've seen it, heard it, experienced it. I believe someday I'll understand its place in life's cycles---perhaps the rotten apple in the barrel which allows us to appreciate the sweetness of the rest? I believe too, in death---I see it as a door to the next cycle or sequence, definitely within the circle of the Ouroboros. I believe there is more to anticipate---both in and out of life as we presently acknowledge it. I believe in the ecstasy of love, be it physical, spiritual, or simply companionable. I believe in joy, living every moment, and I believe in the sadness of its diminishing. I believe in the strength of friendship and community and hope. I believe in the energy of ideas and words and conversation. I believe in the inspiration which produces art and music. I believe in the swirling harmonies weaving throughout. In short, I live, I think, I take joy, I anticipate---I BELIEVE! ABRAXAS!!! (Whew! 'Nuf already!)



Annie Ewing: "But Mama Said..."

...go out and see something of the world, before you settle down in marriage!"

I was observing that many college-mates had goals to have engagement rings by graduation time. And my mama was speaking from experience, as she married my father before she graduated.

As a music major, my college music professor urged me to spend six weeks of summer vacation studying piano with a reputable teacher in New York City. Although residing in a supervised college dorm, this small-town girl enjoyed independence and exploration of the big city environment!

The day following graduation, I accompanied my Mexican graduate friend to her home in Mexico City, for a lengthy visit. Thus began my life-long interest in Latin culture, resulting in future Central American travels with husband and children.

But before settling into married life, I fulfilled another travel adventure in Europe. With limited funds, I crossed the Atlantic Ocean in an old, refurbished cruise liner, filled with college students and educators, seeking "Economy Travel." We spent 10 days pool lounging, and exchanging travel goals with likely travel companions. Ultimately, it was a rewarding time for my first travel experience. However, travel was not my only avenue of future personal experience.

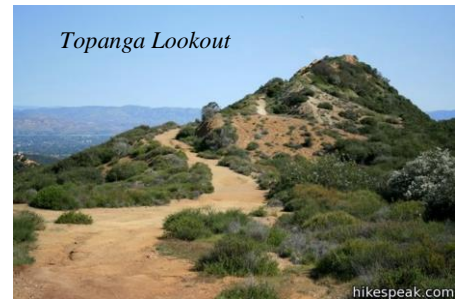
In the 60's and 70's of married life in California where I chose to live, California was at the forefront of the New Age ideas about spiritualism and lifestyles called the Human Potential Movement. It was a challenging time to explore who I was and to become.

My husband and I bought some small acreage in the coastal mountains above Los Angeles, where with hired help, we designed and helped build our home. There we experienced partial self-sufficiency, raising 3 children, animals, food gardens and experiencing small community living. Personally, not having to work, I continued my creative endeavors, and also trained to lead inner city children on nature walks in the Santa Monica Mountain State Park in Topanga.

My mama's advice has truly proven to be my "Joie de Vivre," for I have continued to live openly to what life has offered me. Along this journey, I found communities where I could donate my energy or support to endeavors that bettered the lives of others, and expanded my own outlook on life.

In closing, I would like to leave you with the words of the well-known spiritual leader, Deepak Chopra, who says so beautifully:

*"The Cosmos is structured to bring about growth,
for growth is always in the direction of greater love and happiness."*



Phil Nungesser: *"God in the 21st Century"*

When Lyndon first asked me to share my "Beliefs and Values" at this service, I thought of it as an opportunity to think more intentionally about my belief systems. Traditionally, as a UU, when I'm asked what I believe, I start out with what I don't believe.

Today I'll try to keep my beliefs positive. What I don't believe will become obvious.

▶ I believe the universe started about 13.8 billion years ago with what is called "The Big Bang." At that time all that we know of, matter, energy and time itself began. It's useless to ask or try to answer the question "What was before the big bang?" since time itself as we know it did not exist before then.

▶ I believe that about 4.6 billion years ago our sun and the solar system developed and our Earth began its transformation into the planet we know today. I believe that as the Earth evolved, primitive life formed in the oceans about 4 billion years ago.

▶ I believe that through the process of evolution, homo-sapiens first were identified 2-300 thousand years ago. Since evolution is such a slow process, it is difficult to determine the dividing line between pre-human and modern human beings. About 10,000 years ago, humans became sufficiently "civilized" to develop the use of agriculture and to begin to live in permanent settlements. At some point, these humans began to try to answer greater questions about the nature of life such as:

Why is the Earth here? Why do we die? What happens to us after death? Is there a purpose to all of this? How do I ensure a successful hunt or harvest? What controls the heavens, the sun, the moon, the planets and the stars? What controls the weather and the seasons?

Different societies came up with different answers. Many identified spirits and gods that had human characteristics. These gods created and controlled all of these physical entities. Often humans tried to court favor with the gods through ritual and sacrifice.

▶ I believe that in the early Jewish tradition, the beginning of the western religions that we have to deal with today, the Jews developed the concept of a Jewish God that was superior to all of the other gods. This was not a very likable god. He was only for the Jews, was vengeful, he led the Jews into war with little regard for the vanquished. Clearly not a god for all people.

▶ I believe that the Christians and Muslims took the Jewish God and tried to make it a universal God for all people. Unfortunately, you had to follow this God by accepting a creed based upon the teaching of Mohammad or of Jesus as explained by Paul after his psychic break on the road to Damascus.

(continued next page)

Phil Nungesser, continued

The good thing about this Jewish God is that the Jewish holy book answers all of the questions I listed above. We're here because God created the heavens and Earth and put us here to be his favorite and to take dominion over all things and creatures. We and this Earth are the center of all creation.

The bad thing about this God is that He is an excuse to persecute non-believers and the followers of other western and eastern faiths. We all know about the wars fought in the name of Christianity (Catholic and Protestant), Islam and Judaism. This included wars between varying factions of each faith.

▶ I believe that more evil has been done in the name of this God than good

▶ I believe this God has lost his usefulness. This is why.

We know that the sky is not heaven where God resides. We've seen the sky from the other side.

We know that the earth is not the center of the universe. It's not the center of the solar system. It's not near the center of our galaxy. Our galaxy, the Milky Way, is just an ordinary galaxy with 200-400 billion stars. Our star, the Sun, is in the suburbs along one of the spiral arms. Our galaxy is 100,000 light years across.

If Jesus ascended into heaven at the speed of light he is only 2% across the galaxy so far.

Our galaxy is just one of 100-200 billion galaxies that have been observed.

The God of the western religions is insignificant compared to the majesty of the universe.

We know we were not created, but evolved from other life forms.

We should have known this since the times of Copernicus, Galileo, Darwin, Einstein, and Hubble.

▶ I do believe there is a creative force in the universe that has led to the creation of various worlds and probably life elsewhere.

▶ I believe that people, and probably other sentient beings, have a deep spiritual need. This spirituality allows us to connect with nature, and each other on a deeper level. It is this spirituality that allows us to experience awe at the universe I described, awe of the mountains around us and their turning leaves, music, and our relationships with each other and other animals.

▶ I believe that it is this spiritual side that allows us to live our lives "fully, wisely and well".

▶ I believe that this "Spirit" comes from within, not from the without.

▶ I believe the teachings of many Eastern religions provide a good path to connect with our spiritual selves.

▶ I do believe that humanity can eventually learn to live in peace if we can take some of the good teachings taught in the great religious traditions and use them unencumbered by the concept of an anthropomorphic god.

▶ I believe that the principles taught in the UU traditions are a good roadmap for moving forward.

Blessed be and Namaste.



Lyndon's Letter



Dear Ones,

This past Sunday, we tried an experiment for our time together. We opened our hearts and ears to hear from three of our own – Barb, Annie and Phil – as they shared their statements entitled, "This I Believe." WOW! Who knew we had such insightful writers and poets in our midst? Thank you Phil, Annie, and Barb, for having the courage and grace to share your heartfelt insights with us. We plan to upload these essays onto our website. Many of us were inspired by their presentations, and some asked if there are guidelines for crafting such an essay. They answer is YES! And we would love to hear from you the next time we do this. Consider these "This I Believe" resources:

<https://studylib.net/doc/7820321/this-i-believe--essay-outline>

<https://shoreschools.instructure.com/courses/5944/assignments/66640>

<https://thisibelieve.org/themes/>

Sending best regards,

Lyndon